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JAMES E. MCGIRT

For Your Sweet Sake

POEMS

By

JAMES E. MCGIRT

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For Your Sweet Sake

BORN LIKE THE PINES.

Born like the pines to sing,
The harp and song in ma' breast,
Though far and near,
There's none to hear,
I'll sing as th' winds request.

To tell the trend of ma' lay,
Is not for th' harp or me;
I'm only to know,
From the winds that blow,
What th' theme of ma' song shall be.

Born like the pines to sing,
The harp and th' song in ma' breast,
As th' winds sweep by,
I'll laugh or cry,
In th' winds I cannot rest.

A MYSTERY.

I do not know the ocean's song,
Or what the brooklets say;
At eve I sit and listen long,
I cannot learn their lay.
But as I linger by the sea,
And that sweet song comes unto me
It seems, my love, it sings of thee.

I do not know why poppies grow,
Amid the wheat and rye,
The lilies bloom as white as snow,
I cannot tell you why.
But all the flowers of the spring,
The bees that hum, the birds that sing,
A thought of you they seem to bring.

I cannot tell why radiant Mars,
Moves through the heav'ns at night;
I cannot tell you why the stars,
Adorn the vault with light.
But what sublimity I see,
Upon the mount, the hill, the lea,
It brings, my love, a thought of thee.

I do not know what in your eyes,
Hath caused my heart to glow,
And why my spirit longs and cries,
I vow, I do not know.
But when you first came in my sight,
My slumbering soul awoke in light,
And since that day I've known no night.

THE SPIRIT OF THE OAK.

The spirit of the oak am I,
With head uplifted to the sky,
Though hail and storm beat in my face,
Through weal or woe I hold my place,
With head uplifted to the sky,
The spirit of the oak am I.

Birds I have sheltered many a year,
They hear the storm, desert in fear,
The strenuous eagle strives to stay,
But, ah! at last his heart gives way,
He stretches forth his feathered form,
And sails to heaven above the storm.

Devoid of every earthly friend,
I stand undaunted till the end,
With head uplifted to the sky—
The spirit of the oak am I.

And when the raging storm is o'er,
My feathered friends return once more,
And find me standing calm and free;
They chirp aloud and sing with glee,
With outstretched arm I bid them rest,
I hold no malice in my breast,
But welcome every passer-by—
The spirit of the oak am I.

“HOMESICK.”

Sittin' by de windo',
Gazin' at de snow,
Up here in de Norf land,
No friends dat I know.

Sick o' ways o' city,
Tired o' rip an' tare,
Peaceful, happy Georgia,—
Lord, if I was dare!

No one here to talk to,
'Bout de joys I's seen,
Speak o' possum huntin'—
Don' no what yo' mean.

Banjo lyin' idle,
Not allow'd to play,
People in de nex' room,
"Too much noise," dey say.

Write hom' fo' a ticket?
Dat would be no use,
Sent me one las' summer,
Sol' it like a goose.

Way too long fo' walkin',
Snow a fallin', too,
Lord a mercy on me,
What am I to do?

Com' heah little banjo,
Lie close to my ear,
I'll jes pic' yo' easy,
So dem fools can' hear.

What you say dere, postman?
Letter here fo' me?
No, I jes can' b'leve it,
Han' me; let me see.

Yes, dis is her writin',
Ticket, too, hab com'
Com' on little banjo,
Com', I'm goin' hom'.

DES FO' DAY.

When fo' yeahs yo've been er tryin'
'N' de thing fo' whut yer tries,
Ez yo' reach yer han' ter tek it,
Des mov's off bufore yer eyes,
'N' yer thro' er side yer shovel,
Like yer ain't goin' wuk no mo',
'N' yer wonder whur's ole Gabr'l,
What's de re'son he don't blo';
Den yer wan' ter wuk de harder,
Fo' Ise allus he'rd um say,
 De darkes' hour,
 Des fo' day.

Co'rse its hard ter keep on runnin',
When de stake keeps movin' 'way,
'N' ter hav' er mind fo' wukin',
When yer think der ain't no pay,
But puhaps when clouds er blackes',
'N' der worl' seems at its wu's,
Dat it all com's on er pu'pus,
Maby it fo' warnin' us—
Den yer wan' ter wuk de harder,
Fo' Ise allus he'rd um say,
 De darkes' hour,
 Des fo' day.

MY SOUL'S AT REST.

J's 'bout dahk I com' hom' ploddin',
Tired and ro'sted from de sun.
Tho' I wo'k f'om mo'nin' early,
Seems ma' tas' ez never don';
Th'n its wh'n I sit er scowlin',
Dinah smoothes ma' brow 'n' sa',
"Ephr'm yo's bro't nothin' wit' yo',
Chil', yo can't t'ke nothin' wa';"
An' she re'ch's me ma' banjo,
An' I lay it cross ma' bres',
Fo' my trouble's all forgotten
An' my soul's at res'.

Soon de spring com' on a smilin'
I 'gin frettin' 'bout de grain,
Fo' my little gyarden's parchin'
An' my crop ez needin' rain;
Th'n its wh'n I sit a scowlin',
Dinah smoothes ma' brow 'n' sa',
"Ephr'm yo's bro't nothin' wit' yo',
Chil', yo' can't t'ke nothin' wa';"
An' she re'ch's me ma' banjo,
An' I lay it cross ma' bres',
Fo' my trouble's all forgotten,
An' my soul's at res'.

Som' dese days 't'll all be over,
I will la' me down an' sleep,
Dinah, honey, don't yo' worry,
Tell de people not to weep.
Th'n its w'en I lay a sleepin',
Smooth my bro' as ol' an' sa',
"Ephr'm, honey, I will meet yo',
'Roun' de throne o' God som' da';"
T'ke my banjo f'om de ceilin',
La' it sof'ly 'cross ma' bres',
Fo' my troubles will be over,
An' my soul at res'.

INSPIRATION.

Of'en w'en de race I'm runnin',
Chil' my feet gits blistered so'
Dat I hav' a notion fallin'
'Pears I jus' can' run no mo';
Th'n I 'gin to think o' Lizah,
Wit' a smil' upon her face
Stan'in' at de gate er waitin',
Jus' to see me win de race,
An' I start out wit' new courage,
Fo' to win de race or die.
Well I feel jus' like a feather,
Man, I fairly fly.

Dere are times w'en courage leav' me,
Tho' I thro' my burden down,
Somethin' sa's deres no use tryin',
Seems I jus' don' wan' no crown;
Th'n I 'gin to think o' Lizah,
An' I wondah wh't she'd say,
Ef she'd come along an' fin' me,
In de gutter by de way.
An' I gather up my burden,
An' I start wit' all my might,
Fo' my limbs at once grow stronger,
An' my load gits light.

Clouds may gath'r dark ez midnight,
Matters not de cos' o' Fate,
All I wan' to kno' ez Lizah,
Waitin' fo' me at de gate;
Tho'ns and thistles lose dey terro',
Hill an' mountains melt er way;
Tho' de worl' seem dark an' drary,
At de tho't, 'twill turn to day.
Fo' w'en I think o' Anner Lizah,
All de worl' gits clear an' bright.
An' my limbs dey grow much stronger,
An' my load gits light.

THE CENTURY'S PRAYER.

Lord God of Hosts incline thine ear,
To this Thy humble servant's prayer;
May war and strife and discord cease,
This Century, Lord God, give us peace.
The thoughts of strife, the curse of war,
Henceforth, dear Lord, may we abhor,
One blessing more, our store increase,
This is our prayer, Lord, give us peace.

May those who rule us, rule with love,
As Thou dost rule the Courts above;
May man to man as brothers feel,
Lay down their arms and quit the field;
Change from our brows the angry looks,
Turn swords and spears to pruning hooks,
One blessing more our store increase,
This is our prayer, Lord, give us peace.

May flags of war fore'er be furled,
The milk-white flag wave o'er the world;
Let not a slave be heard to cry,
"The lion and lamb together lie;"
May nations meet in one accord,
Around one peaceful festive board.
One blessing more, our store increase,
This is our prayer, Lord, give us peace.

ANNA, WON'T YOU MARRY ME?

Anna, child, the spring has come,
Listen to the robins, dear;
The honeysuckles are in bloom,
The fragrance fills the air.
A dove is cooing soft and low,
Telling how he loves his mate;
For you the flowers seem to grow,
For you they seem to bloom and wait.
Two by two the sparrows build,
High up in the orchard tree—
Anna, Anna, Anna, won't you marry me?

Anna, O! ho! ho!
The aching of my heart;
It seems, my love, I'm bound to go,
If we have to live apart.
My heart says "Anna" all the time,
Love, I'll die for thee—
Anna, Anna, Anna, won't you marry me?

'Member, love, the vow you made,
When out in the orchard, dear;
The stars can witness what you said,
The moon was sailing clear.
You promised, love, that you'd be mine,

Promised in the early spring.
And now the bees are 'round the vine,
Everywhere the song-birds sing,
In every flower I see your name,
Everywhere it seems to say,
"Anna, Anna, this is our wedding day."

Anna, O! ho! ho!
The aching of my heart;
It seems, my love, I'm bound to go,
If we have to live apart;
My heart says "Anna" all the time—
Love, I'll die for thee—
Anna, Anna, Anna, won't you marry me?

SPRING.

I rise up in de mornin'
Early in de spring,
And hear de bees a hummin'
An' hear de robins sing;
Th're com' o'er me a feelin'
So queer I know not why.
I jus' sit down an' listen,
It seem I 'most could cry;
The win' has lost its bitin',
Aroun' de vine de bees,

The air is full o' fragrance
From blossoms of the trees.
I stroll out in de garden,
An' take a look about,
I see de groun' a crackin',
The seed has 'gun to sprout.
Beneath de vine a blos'om,
All dried an' curle' it lies,
A striped little melon,
Is hangin' 'fore my eyes.
Its den I 'gin a hum'in'
An' j'in the birds and sing,
My heart is full o' raptur',
An' grandeur o' the spring.

A WARRIOR'S JUDGMENT.

A warrior stood before his Master,
Bruised and bleeding from the fight,
Not for power, neither honor,
But in battling for the right.

Torn and tattered was his body,
Gashed and wounded was his face,
Stood he waiting for the Master
To assign his resting place.

The Master gazed on him in pity,
Saw the form which He had made,
Once like His, now so distorted;
Gazed into his face and said:

“Tell me, son, is this the body
That I gave you for a while—
Gave to you so pure and holy,
You return it so defiled?”

“Master,” said the trembling soldier,
“In yonder world where I have been,
Daily I’ve encountered battle
With the daring monster, Sin.

“Each step I fought my journey through;
He strove to keep me from the goal;
Though he scored me yet I conquered;
Master, he’s not scarred the soul.”

The Master saw the soul still shining,
Thought of His own hand and side,
Beckoned to the brightest heaven
That the gate be opened wide.

Then the Master cried, “Immortal!”
The soul came flashing from his breast,
Pointing to the fairest heaven,
“Enter thou in peaceful rest!”

UNCLE IS'REL.

De peopl' call me a conger,
Jus' caus' I do som' tricks,
An' caus' I got dis lucky black cat bone,
Can gather roots to make tea wit',
Not 'les' dey talk 'o th't,
Dey's scared o' me an' say I tote load stone.

Don' kear whut I do noble,
No matter how I work,
Dey say de load stone don' it jus' de same.
Like when I took Lucindy
'Way from Perfessor Jones,
Dey up an' said I got huh wit' some skeame.

Let somethin' happen to de neighbors,
Let one o' th'm git sick,
Fo' it old Is'rel got to bear de blame,
Jes' caus' I got dis goofer,
An' a rabbit foot or two;
Dey say I do mos' ever'thing dey dream.

Som'tim' dey talk so scand'lo's,
It gits me all up-sot,
Wh'n worrin' over whut dey say,
I wan' 'o tek my goofer,
As' ever'thing I got,
An' let de people see me thro' 'm 'way,

I'll gath'r dem together,
An' put 'em in a pile,
I 'gin to think about de needy day,
I think whut they'd do fo' me;
An' git mad wit' myself,
Fo' worrin' over whut de people say.

Fo' when I 'gin a thinkin',
'Bout whut migh' com' o' me,
Can' help the tears from comin' in my eye,
One tim' de worl' was 'gains' me,
An' frien's had turn' their backs,
My rabbit foot an' goofer stood righ' by.

Yo' call me whut yo' wan' to,
An' jus' don' bother me,
I'm goin' 'o keep the things thet bro't me thro';
Yo' talk o' mother's teachin',
But whut they don' fo' me,
Is much as any mother'd ever do.

I use' to mark de pathway
Thet run 'fore marster's door,
An' ev'ry mornin' he would hav' to cross
The load stone in my pocket,
I don' jus' lik' I pleas';
Mos' every body tho't I was de boss.

When marster'd cross de mark,
Yo' see him 'menc' to smile,

To git•wit' me it always made him proud;
I made de women lov' me,
An' long as I was thar,
Nobody ever hurt one o' de crowa

When I go out a courtin',
I goofer up my hands,
An' put a rabbit down into my sho',
No man on earth can beat me,
A winnin' o' de lov';
Fo' when I meet de girls dat's whut I do.

Make out I'm glad to see them,
An' grab'm by de han',
Be rubbin' load stone on 'em all de tim';
No use in tryin' to shun me,
I'm goin' to win yo'r love,
Fo' ef I want you, I can make yo' min'.

IF LOVING WERE WOOING.

If wishing were getting,
Ah! wouldn't it be fine?
If loving were wooing,
Alice, thou would'st be mine;
Neither wealth nor honor,
Nor gem from the sea,
Can cause such a yearning
As I have for thee.

What need of a ruby
When your cheeks I see?
Those gems 'neath your lashes
Are diamonds to me;
Your forehead's a sapphire,
Beaming 'neath a curl;
Your lips seem a rosebud,
Hiding two rows of pearl.

WINTER.

Oh! the winter's coming,
Leaves are getting brown,
Hickory nuts and acorns
Falling to the ground.

Pumpkins getting yellow,
Persimmons getting ripe,
O'possum 'gin to fatten
And quails begin to pipe.

Bird dog in the broom sage,
Hunter's got his gun.
Erastus with old Traylor—
O'possum'd better run.

Turkeys in the corn-crib,
Chickens got their sway;
Let'm be, they're fattening,
For Thanksgiving Day.

THE SIEGE OF MANILA.

Just a few miles from Manila Bay,
Near the close of a summer's day,
When the sun was flooding with gold the west,
Our fleet was ordered to stop and rest.
After the regular meal was served,
And the code of evening was observed,
Each retired to his usual place,
And gazed into the dome of space.
With awe they watched the steady blaze,
As down on us they seemed to gaze.
I never shall forget the night,
The silvery stars were shining bright,
A full-orbed moon hung in the west,
As if to see the great contest.
The wind was just a peaceful gale;
It was a pleasant night to sail.
The ocean waves were rolling 'long,
And pealing forth a mournful song;
Soon from the sea a mist arose,
That caused the starry book to close.
When sable night had reigned her last,
The rosy morn was coming fast.
Within the glimmer of the day,
We sailed to take Manila Bay.
Soon the fort loomed up in sight,

From out the windows gleamed a light.
Then when we saw the deadly gun,
Bright, glistening in the rising sun,
It seemed that fire came in our blood.
Like tigers by our guns we stood,
It seemed our souls would burst with ire,
While waiting the command to fire.
In perfect silence, not a breath,
An instant could have brought us death.
The mist that from the ocean rose,
Had hid us from our Spanish foes.
And when the enemy sent no sound,
A whisper 'mong us passed around.
"Fortune's with us," our captain cried,
"We've entered in and are not spied."
By the fort we 'gan to start,
A distance though we sailed a part.
One by one our ships stole by,
As wolves before a shepherd's eye.
All of our fleet had safely passed,
Except McCullough, which fortune blessed,
Within its furnace 'cured a rick,
And sparks went flying from its stack.
The sparks that from the ship did fly,
Met all at once the fort men's eye.
Through glasses they began to peep,
Their glasses raised the cause to greet.
To their surprise they spied our fleet.
A cry of terror, a dash, a run,
The shells came blazing from each gun,

Before an instant hardly passed,
Around us shells were falling fast,
Their mines in vain they did explode,
But we were safe in our abode.
Our captain gave command to fire,
Which seemed to be our soul's desire.
Before the words he could repeat,
The shells went blazing from our fleet,
Our hearts were burned with hatred dire,
We filled the air with shell and fire.
While the battle was raging high,
And glowing shells were falling nigh,
Dewey back through memory gazed,
Saw the Maine, became enraged.
And with his dazzling sword in hand,
He whirled it high and gave command,
With fury blazing from his eye,
With thundering voice was heard to cry,
"Remember the Maine! Speed! Haste!
Be careful, boys, no shells to waste."
Remembered we, our blood did run,
And sent shells flying from our gun.
Our boats, like fierce Vesuvius seemed,
From out our guns shells poured and screamed,
Directed by an immortal eye,
For not a strayward shell did fly.
But each of the shells from the guns that went,
Performed the mission on which 'twas sent.
Our captain took his glass in hand,
And o'er the battle quickly scanned.

“Stop the guns,” he quickly cried,
“Fortune now is on our side;
The Spanish fleet is in a blaze,
And sinking fast before my gaze.”
When this command to us was given,
Three hearty cheers went up to heaven,
And when the sun sent down her sheen,
Not a Spanish boat was to be seen.
The valiant fleet of tyrant Spain,
Beneath the mighty deep was slain.

SIGNS O' RAIN.

Whin yoah corns an' bunions achin',
An' yoah body's full o' pain,
Yo' can res' right shure an' sertin',
Dat we's goin' 'o hav' som' rain.

Cours' de achin' is not plesen'
Tho' I wish it I mus' 'fess,
But not 'caus' I lov' de hurtin',
But I kno' I'll get som' rest.

In de winter I go huntin',
Wh'n de groun' is white wi'h snow,
In de summer I go fishin',
Wh'n de groun's too wet to plow.

Do yo' hear de dogs a barkin',
Lik' dey's struck a raccoon trail?
Sho' sine o' fallin' weather,
Chile, I's neber seen it fail.

Run out, Jacob, look back Southward,
See if ther's a cloud in sight,
Goshie, whut a clap o' thunder,
Clouds 're hangin' black as night.

Jacob heard de rain a fallin',
Pitter patter on de roof,
Fold his arms and looked at Hannah,
Now yo' see I's tol' de truth.

Daddy in de chimney corner,—
"Jake, I hear you wishin' rain,"
"Yes sur, dad, de garden parchin'
Don't yo' think 'twill help de grain?"

NO USE IN SIGNS.

Der's no use bein' scared o' cungers,
An' lettin' black cats turn you back,
You jus' go on about your business,
An' let de cungers hav' your track.

Fo' Friday aint no wus' dan Monday,
As far as luck to you's concerned,
You han' may itch, don't spit into it,
You won't git nothin' but what you earn.

Your nose may itch, no one is comin',
Your foot may itch, you'll go nowhere,
An' you can let de worms crawl o'er you,
An' den no new dress get to wear.

'N' caus' you have a little learnin',
You need not try to figure rich,
Jus' go an' get a spade or shovel,
An' go runnin' to de ditch.

And when you feel a little happy,
Don't think of all de grief you've had.
An' 'caus' your eyes is trimblin' little,
Dat ain't no sign you goin' git mad.

An' if de toe next to de big one,
Is kinder long—you ain't goin' 'o rule,
Because my hair grows on my forehead,
You need not take me for a fool.

I'm goin' to sing soon in de mornin',
De hawks may catch me before night,
But if dey do you need not worry,
Jus' say: "I bet they had to fight."

LULLABY, GO TO SLEEP.

I'll ne'er forget the day,
When I was young and gay,
A rolling 'round the floor in Tennessee;
From th' cotton field so white,
My ma would come at night,
And fondly hold me in her arms and say:

“Go to sleep, baby mine,
Little birdie in your nest;
Humming bees have left the vine,
Go to sleep and take your rest.”

In winter cold and chill,
At night, when all was still,
I'd wake to find her standing over me,
A smile upon her face,
A creeping 'round the place,
She'd tuck the cover over me, and sing:

“Go to sleep, baby mine,
Little birdie in your nest;
Humming bees have left the vine,
Go to sleep and take your rest.”

So many years have passed,
Since we assembled last,
That dear old soul has gone away to dwell.
If this whole world was mine,
The wealth I would decline,
If I could only hear my mother sing:

“Go to sleep, baby mine,
Little birdie in your nest;
Humming bees have left the vine,
Go to sleep and take your rest.”

GOD BLESS OUR COUNTRY.

God bless our home, land of the free,
And those who rule, who e'er they be;
Protect the flag, and let it wave
Over all free men, but not the slave.
May we, dear Lord, sustain its name;
Forbid that it shall trail in shame.
To those who from oppression flee,
May this our land, a refuge be.

May we sustain all we profess;
Forbid that we should man oppress;
May we accept fraternal love
And live as we must live above.

TRUE LOVE.

How true, dear, my love is;
Too great to compare,
Truer than the stars,
That shoot from their sphere;
Think how the sun sets
And withdraws its light;
Think how I love thee
Alone in the night.
Think of its rising,
How it varies in time;
Oh! there is no varying
In this heart of mine.
True as a rock, then—
How could I this say
When softest of waters
Can wear stone away?
Even time must change
To eternity.
Oh! there is no changing
In my love for thee.
True as eternity!
No, it's not begun;
All must start even
When a race is to run.
When old eternity
Becomes mossy and gray,

Then, dear, I'll love thee
The same as to-day.
Fear not that pale death
Will drift us apart;
Ah! death cannot sever
The love in my heart.
When we reach heaven
We shall find our own;
I'm told we will know there
As we are known.

WEEP NOT.

Weep not, friend, o'er your condition,
He who tries can find a way;
Labor, and to God petition,
Strive, and you will rise some day.

Let your steps be sure and steady,
Push ahead and never stop;
Though the field seems filled already,
There is room still at the top.

If you wish to climb life's ladder,
Start to climb it from the ground;
If great your strength, it makes it sadder
To have to climb it round by round.

MEMORY OF W. W. BROWN.

Dear Father Brown, the great, the good,
The noble leader of our race;
With task complete, his spirit fled
To heaven, its final resting place,
And there in peace it shall remain,
Securely wrapped from care and pain;
His body 'neath sweet roses sleeps,
An angel o'er him vigil keeps.

Weeping for one so dearly loved,
Too soon it seems we had to part;
To see him hid beneath the clay,
Sharp sorrow fills the aching heart,
It seems I see him on the stand,
Fain I could hear him give command;
And with his outstretched, loving arm,
Imploring people to reform.

Think of the great work he has done,
Behold the great reformer's hand;
Ten thousand marching to and fro,
To seek, to help, to lend a hand,
Thy life has not been spent in vain,
Thy deeds are monuments of fame;
Thy name from earth will ne'er depart,
'Tis graved with kindness on the heart.

No more to meet us here on earth,
The noble impulse thou hast given;
Will urge us on the mighty course,
Until we, too, are called to heaven.
Beneath the clods, is it the last?
Oh, no, the memory of the past;
As Bethlehem's star the wise men led,
His light will lead us though he's dead.

WHEN DE SUN SHINES HOT.

No, dere ain't no use er workin' in de blazin'
summertime,
Whin de fruit hab filled de orchard, an' de berries
bend de vine;
Der's enuf ter keep us libin' in de little gyarden
spot,
An' der ain't no use'n workin' w'en de sun shines
hot.

Fur I'ze read it in de Bible 'bout de lilies how dey
grow,
It was put in dere er purpus dat de workin' men
mout know,
Dat dis diggin' an er grabben, wusn't meant in
our lot,
An' der ain't no use'n workin' we'n de sun shínes
hot.

Does yer hear de streams er callin' az it crawls
erlong de rill;

Does yer se de vines er wavin', biddin' me ter
kum an' fill?

Whar's ma' hook and line—say, Hannah, give
me all de bait yer got,

Fur der ain't no use'n workin' w'en de sun shines
hot.

Des 'bout dark I kum hum, strollin' wid a bunch
er lubly trout;

Hannah she c'mmence er grinnin' 'little Rastus
'gin to shout;

Soon de hoe cake is er bakin', fish er fryin', table
sot.

No, der ain't no use'n workin' w'en de sun shines
hot.

EXPERIENCE.

They told me that the path I took was hard,
That many a time my weary feet would bleed;
They said at last I'd find my way was barred.
I would not heed.

They bade me stop and go the other way;
This path, they said, Fate thorns and thistles
strew;
But I was young, Ambition led the way;
I thought I knew.

But when my bleeding feet came to the end,
And I was bound and scourged by cruel Fate;
Alas, I cried, pray let me start again;
It was too late.

SUCCESS.

Success is a light upon the farther shore,
That shines in dazzling splendor to the eye,
The waters leap, the surging billows roar,
And he who seeks the prize must leap and try.

A mighty host stand trembling on the brink,
With anxious eyes they yearn to reach the goal.
I see them leap, and, ah! I see them sink—
As gazing on, dread horror fills my soul!

Yet to despair I can but droop and die,
'Tis better far to try the lashing deep.
I much prefer beneath the surge to lie,
Than death to find me on this bank asleep.

DEFEATED.

Vain and defeated each effort of life,
Feeble and hoary, sick of the strife,
But yet in my bosom a spirit says, "rise,"
A voice calling onward out of the skies.

Though wounded in battle, left by the way,
I hear the voice calling, and strive to obey.
And make my last effort the battle to gain;
Ah! death is upon me, I struggle in vain.

I SHALL SUCCEED.

I shall succeed, although Fate rules to-day,
And heaps up thorns and thistles in my way,
I bear the yoke and tread them with a smile,
For I am sure it is but for a while.

Each day that dawns, I strive to break the chain,
Although to-day it seems so massive strong;
Although it seems my labors are in vain,
I'll strive and wait, it matters not how long.

For like the drip that falls upon the millstone,
So soft it strikes, at first it seems but play;
But drop on drop a tiny dent will come—
We turn at length and find it washed away.

Thus will I beat Fate's chains, though strokes be
feeble,
To hasty men it all may seem but play.
The hand of man, though soft as drops, is able
To wear at length the hardest stone away.

THE ROSY DAWN.

From out the rosy dawn the sun comes forth;
See, love, what robes of splendor deck the sea!
So is my soul hallowed with joy and love,
Gleaming for thee.

For, when at morn I stroll along the path,
There I behold thy beauty from afar;
And, like the rosy dawn, it fills my soul;
I stand in awe.

Look, love, the rosy scene is in the West!
And soon this world shall be in solemn night.
So will my soul if thou shouldst, like the sun,
Withdraw your light.

A SONG OF LOVE.

A song I sing a blessing so divine,
Which all can feel yet no one can define;
It comes like hallowed glory from above,
We feel the joy and call the blessing love.

Just as we know when zephyr's in the rye,
We cannot see, still how we mark its way;
Just so it is when love meets you and me—
We bend and sway.
For who can hide the love that's in his breast?

He only feels, though known by all the rest;
For when love comes the gall is changed to
sweet,—
It brought the valiant Hector to its feet.

Just as love brought the heroes kneeling down,
She leads the world quite gently with her sway,
No need of lash—just simply smile or frown—
We will obey.

Yes, love can lead her victim just at will;
Greater the pain, greater he loves her still;
Through thorns and thistles till his feet are sore,
She bids him stop; he cries to follow more.

Just as a bird must know the limb's secure
Before she comes to build on it her nest,
So love will nestle when she finds us true,
Deep in our breast.

Just as we bruise a pear to make it sweet,
So love will bruise her victim with her feet;
It shoves the baby eagle from its nest;
Before it falls, her wings go 'neath its breast.

THANKSGIVING PRAYER.

Lord God, I turn on this Thanksgiving Day,
To view the path o'er which I've made my way,
Although a path of thorns my eye may greet,
Although I feel the sting still in my feet;
Although the harvest fails my barn to fill,
With grateful heart I bow and thank Thee still.

For I am sure what e'er has been my lot,
How meek, how poor, is more than I deserve.
Unto Thy will I bow and murmur not.

I'll not condemn His justice—whom I serve.
I'll not complain and call Thee, Father, stern.
Because Thy sacred plans I've failed to learn;

The cause of all this grief I cannot tell.
And yet, like Job of old, I'll not rebel.
Lord God, I turn on this Thanksgiving Day,
To view the path o'er which I made my way.
Although a path of thorns my eye may greet,
Although I feel the sting still in my feet,
Although the harvest fails my barn to fill,
With grateful heart I bow and thank Thee still.

LOVE.

So oft I've read what poets sang of love,
To feel their joy for years in vain I sought;
At last love came, a cooing little dove;
The joy it brought!

And since the day when I first sipped the wine,
I've felt a song I would all men could hear;
Though vainly I have sought for word and rhyme
To make it clear.

To teach this song, love only has the power;
To mortal man the door is sealed, though near.
Some day the door will open, you'll discover
Love's song and hear.

RIGHT WILL WIN.

Think not, my friend, if right be crushed to-day,
That violent wrong will ever hold the day;
A noble cause aside the kings may toast,
If it be right, Oh! no, 'tis never lost.
Know ye, the stone the builders first refused,
Was left alone, but at the top was used?
God stopped and called the leper from the cross;
He can not use the haughty and the proud;
From out the stagnant pool He makes to grow
The fragrant water lilies, white as snow.

VICTORIA, THE QUEEN.

Oh, victorious Queen, it's through thy loyal grace
I bring this wreath—a token from my race;
True, thou art gone, no more on earth to meet;
I come to spread these lilies at thy feet.
Of all the wreaths brought from the floral shrine,
This wreath alone portrays the life of thine.
These many years thou wert before our sight,
So calm and kind, so pure, serenely bright,

Like glowing sunlight, seated on thy throne,
Giving us rays, withholding them from none.
One soul, one God, has been thy sacred theme;
The high, the low—their cries were heard the
same.

Rest on, grand soul, in perfect peace above,
For thou wert love, and love must rest with love;
Even though we weep, though sorrow fills our
breast,

We do not wish to call thee from thy rest,
A star, though quenched, thy light is shining still;
Thy voice, though hushed, thy subjects know thy
will.

LIFE AND LOVE.

Life is a boundless sea, on which men float;
Succeed we may to ride the waves of Fate,
Yet still within our paths there surely lies,
The chasm death, the voidless ultimate.

Love is a sacred shrine, to which men kneel,
Succeed we may, the blessing to attain,
Yet rest assured the hallowed joy it brings,
E'en though sublime, somehow is tinged with
pain.

A SLOTHFUL YOUTH.

Beside the road in youth I sat in slumber,
The passers hailed and told me it was day;
“But, ah!” said I, “my days are great in number.”

And soundly slept, regardless of their say.

Now, here I sit; the night has come upon me;
I fain would go, but darkness hides my way.
I’d turn to God that He would look upon me;
I’ve now forgot the prayer I used to pray.

Yet, while I sit and vainly wait, the morning,
I yearn to tell, but ah! it is too late.
That he who sleeps at day and fails the warning,
Shall wake at night, the dreadful ultimate.

A QUEST.

Tell me, my soul, tell me, I pine to know,
Some future day, known as the harvest time!
Am I to reap from all the grain I sow,
My ill-wrought deed am I to claim as mine?

If I should hurl my javelin in the dark,
And spread out thorns and thistles 'long the way,
Will it return and find me as its mark?
Am I to tread the thorns some future day?

O Lord, I pray that Thou wouldst guide my
hand;
Let not an evil seed by me be sown,
Or cause to sprout within a brother's land
What I should hate to see within my own.

SIGNS OF DEATH.

When you hear at night de cows a lowin',
An' dogs a howlin' out der mournful soun',
I tell you now you better get you ready,
Dey's goin' to plant som'body in de groun'.

You need not b'lieve in signs, not less you wan'
to.

But some of dese morn' you'll wake up in su'prize,
An' if dem dogs com' howlin' where I'm sleepin',
I tell you now dis darkey's goin' 'o rise.

If der's any doubts o' bein' ready,
Down on my knees a prayer I'll make,
You can laugh an' say dat darkey's skeery,
I'm like a rabbit, can' trus' no mistake.

It may not be fo' me de dog's a howlin',
But when dey howl my path I'm goin' 'o sweep,
An' I ain't goin' to bed no mo' dat evenin',
Fo' death will never com' an' fin' me sleep.

Der're lots o' learned people talkin' bully,
An' sayin' der's nothin' in de signs;
But if dey com' a' roun' me with dere learnin'
I'm jus' er goin' 'o tell 'em dey're lyin'.

I'se got no time to listen to dere learnin',
Fo' dey is jus' a tryin' to show off smart,
Der ain't nobody, don't care how dey's learned,
Dat's got de signs all wiped out o' dere heart.

Fo' learnin' never takes from man his habits,
It only smears dem over wid a stain,
An' caus' you're learned, you is not an angel,
Dem same old traits er lurkin' still within.

I kno' I'm learned as high as anybody,
Yit whin a chicken coop I'm passin' by,
Dere com' to me again dem same old feelin's,
I'm goin' 'o hav' dat chicken 'cep' he fly.

A SAILOR'S DEPARTURE.

My dearest child, I have no wealth to give you,
No ring of gold to leave thee as we part,
Going, yet why should going grieve you?
You have my heart.

In calm, in storm, no matter how the weather,
My one great thought shall ever be of thee;
Tell me, I pray thee, tell me whether
You'll think of me?

Without your love I wish my burden lighter;
With head bowed low I plod life's weary way,
But with your love, each day is brighter,
To toil is play.

The ship has come, I must no longer tarry;
The lamp of love for you will ever burn;
Farewell, pray let your soul be merry,
Soon I'll return.

When I return, what e'er may be my treasure—
That happy day, I pray God that we meet—
My life, my all, I'll cast with pleasure
Down at your feet.

He said "Good-bye"—the tears were swiftly
falling—

The ship moved off, she, left alone to dwell;
The signal sounded as they parted,
Their last farewell!

A TEST OF LOVE.

The land of Avia, lovely is the scene,
Clothed every evening in a silvery sheen;
The rippling brook and birds make music clear,
Wild flowers bloom in plenty all the year,
And mistletoe's the largest tree that's found,
Its roots embedded firmly in the ground.
In vales of mistle, 'long the Aztec shore,
Stand board-roofed huts, numbering but a score;
The largest one is Haggar's—well in years;
No happier man in all the place appears.
His daughter, Alice, simple, pure and good,
And loved by all in that fair neighborhood.
Of all the youths that came to woo her love
No voice but Ed's could cause her heart to move.
Ed Lassiters, son of a magistrate,
Was loved by all, and no one could he hate;
In peace and love he served the village long,
And no one e'er complained he'd done them
wrong;
And Ed, his son, a steady, sober youth,

Was famed throughout the village for his truth.
Alice loved Ed; when children it was seen
That Ed loved her and held her as his queen.
Together they were always seen at play.
What e'er she willed it pleased Ed to obey;
"My doll, a house," was all she had to speak,
For sticks and bark at once Ed went to seek;
To bake mud cakes more water she'd demand;
Ed quickly brought and placed it at her hand.
In all their play they were not seen to pout;
Always in love there was no falling out.
Each day to school they hand in hand would go,
Her books and slate Ed carried to and fro;
Each Sunday morn, the chapel bell would chime,
And Ed with Alice marched away on time;
To church at night Alice alone he'd bring,
And from one book both in the choir would sing.
The childish love that bound them when at play
To greater love soon yielded up its sway.
Were children once, but ah, no children now;
Ed was a farmer, master of the plow;
Alice, a maid, how skilful at the loom,
And all affairs pertaining to the home;
Once close they lived, but now three miles apart;
But miles cannot divide true heart from heart.
The village lads loved well the maiden dear,
But knew their love and would not interfere;
So hand in hand through life they always went,
So lovingly, so happy, so content.
But, ah, if he had known the pain to come,

He would have had her safely in his home.
To Avia came a family seeking health;
A noble family; great, too, was their wealth;
A man and wife, a son, the darling joy;
John, was his name, and handsome was the boy.
He saw the maid, and love came at the sight;
To win her love he sought with all his might.
Soon she loved John and soon he loved the maid,
So swift is love when gold can give it aid.
And since that day the youth came from the
north

Ed's cloak of love had keenly felt a moth.
Soon on his face, there dwelt a heavy frown;
Each day he passed, his head was hanging down.
And all the village wondered as he passed
What made the change, what made him so down-
cast.

Each Sunday morn he strolled alone to church;
We sympathized—we knew it grieved him much;
As when the ivy from the oak we tear,
It seemeth lonely, ah! it seemeth bare.
So 'twas with Ed when they were seen apart,
He seemed e'er sad, so withered was his heart.
He loved her still, and each time he would call
He plead in vain that she would love him all.
Each night Ed called, each night both lovers met;
They'd try in vain each other to outset.
When on her face Ed read her heart's desire
He'd ask his hat, reluctantly retire.
Poor Ed, in youth he saw her any time,

Now once a week his visits were confined.
Each youth desired the maid to be his bride;
She loved them both, and how could she decide?
Three months had passed—the choice she had not
made;

With bashful face she sought her mother's aid.
She hinted out the burden of her heart;
Her loving mother knew the other part.
“Oh, Ed and John,” she said, with trembling
voice,

“I love them both and cannot make a choice;
Three months in vain the choice I've tried to
make;

It's left with you, mother, which one to take.”
The mother thought awhile and slowly said:
“I cannot choose the man for you to wed,
For much is in the saying of the bard:
'Make your own bed and keep it if it's hard';
So make your choice; if he's not what he seems
On no one else can you well place the blame.
Since I'm your ma, advice 'tis mine to give:
With whom you choose through life pray try to
live,

For they who wed and quit without a cause
Have broken o'er our Holy Father's laws.
Unless you can for him lay down your life
Never, my child, consent to be his wife,
For married life is greater than a dream,
And all have found it greater than it seemed.
To know the one whose love is pure and best,

I think it right to bring him to a test.
How can you judge from the word the greater
love?

Does rain tell all that it has seen above?
What steed an empty wagon cannot pull?
Ah, place him to a wagon that is full.
The many words! but, ah, the simple few,
Can have a great effect if spoken true.
The sweetest words make not the greatest youth,
Ah, he is great who sayest but the truth.
The world to-day is so enrapt with sin,
That it is right with women and with men,
Before they be exalted in our sight,
We must have great assurance they are right.
So Ed and John seem good, I love them well;
The one for you to choose I cannot tell.
The way to find the one to suit you best,
Put life at stake and give them both a test,
For he who takes a maiden for his wife
Should count it joy to give for her his life."
She knew that neither Ed nor John could swim;
To try the deep would be a test for them.
She thought how each of them enjoyed to row.
She said: "Some day, while rowing, drop your
oar,

And tell him bring the oar you'll be his bride;
First let the oar beneath the boat be tied;
Engage them now, go quick and tie the oar."
One came at three, the other came at four.
I feign would tell them what the mother said;

So great the plot when by a woman made.
She set the time, and John and Ed complied;
The evening came and John was by her side.
With John she goes, as though she loved him
best,

Out in the boat that she his love might test.
From youth she knew the art to dive and swim;
'Twas all a secret, 'twas not known to him.
They reached the deep where angry billows roar;
She for a purpose dropped her only oar.
Out from the boat the oar the waves did toss;
The maid screamed out in anguish, "We are
lost!"

The oar was fairly whirling by a wave;
The frightened maid knelt praying God to save.
The coward youth sat trembling pale as death;
His face had changed, it seemed he had no breath.
The maid knelt still, pretending loud to weep.
But through her fingers at the youth she'd peep.
She saw the youth still fainting in dismay;
She would have laughed, but thought she would
betray.

She raised her head, the oar again she spied;
Beneath the boat the oar with cord was tied.
She really cried, for lo! her face was red,
"John, bring the oar, I'll be your wife," she
said.

But John sat still, for he could not obey;
"I cannot swim," was all she heard him say.
She bade him think, she bade him count the cost;

"Without the oar won't both our lives be lost? If you sit here is death not sure?" she said.

John knew it was, and cowardly dropped his head.

With trembling voice she cried, imploring still, "Go, bring the oar; if you won't, John, I will. What will you do?" She paused to give him time.

He would not go; she leaped into the brine; She sank and rose, and loudly came a sound: "Pray come and help! quick! love, for soon I drown!"

John saw his love the third time disappear; She cried in vain, for John refused to stir.

Again she rose and quickly seized the oar, Toward the boat the oar she swiftly bore.

Soon in the boat, dripping, she took her seat, As John sat cowardly gazing at her feet;

Then to the shore she quickly made her way;

She reached the shore, to him was heard to say:

"The oar wasn't lost; by this thread it was tied; My life to you I'm thinking to confide."

And this she said: "I did it just to prove Whether or not, you're worthy of my love."

She told him all, and said: "John, can't you see That you are false and do not care for me."

And John stood crying, begging not to tell;

She vowed she'd not, and said to him farewell.

He went his way and she sat on the beach—

I'll tell you why before the end is reached—

'Twas nearly four, and Ed, her other beau,
Had promised then to meet her for a row.
The hour had come, the village clock was heard;
Ah! Ed was there; he always kept his word.
Up from the beach she rose, her friend to greet;
She had not heard the tramping of his feet.
Soon in the boat they both sat face to face;
She took the oar as though out for a race;
Then with the oar she gave the sea a sweep,
And soon the boat was sailing on the deep;
"Here comes a ship; look, Ed, I see the top."
He turned his head, the oar she did let drop.
"Dear Ed," she cried, "pray take me to my
home;

I dropped the oar and death is sure our doom."
He gazed at her and saw her faint away.
"Don't cry, my dear," she softly heard him say;
He raised her head, consoling words he speaks,
Brushed back her hair and kissed her rosy cheeks;
Pretended she unconscious of a kiss;
Yet still her soul was thrilled with holy bliss.
He raised her quickly in a fond embrace,
And gently wiped her tear-stained, blushing face.
The tears upon her rosy cheek repose
Appeared like sparkling dewdrops on a rose.
As men in hurrying pressed for want of time,
Can find a moment still to sip the wine,
So hurried Ed, for fear the oar he'd miss,
Yet still found time, yea, thrice, her lips to kiss;
Just as a man is moved by sparkling drinks

Performs an act before of danger thinks.
The kiss affected Ed as strongest wine;
He could not swim, yet did not fear the brine;
He did not stop for once to count the cost,
Nor thought he once that either would be lost.
He said, unless his queen should reach the shore,
Out of his arm he would have made an oar;
Then from the boat he leaped, and could not
swim;

An angry wave came quick and covered him.
Strangled he rose, though struggling for his life,
He cried aloud: "O, God, pray, save my wife!"
He did not drown, for she well knew the art,
And leaped and bore him speechless to her heart.
Hold of the cord the oar she quickly drew;
Yet, brought the oar she said he never knew;
He really thought he saved his lover's life.
He woke and cried aloud: "You are my wife."
For when he sank he was a senseless elf;
To-day he thinks he brought the oar himself.
And when she saw how artless was his love
The love within her heart was felt to move;
Where there is love much love it doth inspire,
Thus blazed her love and set his soul on fire.
It seemed by love her heart would now be rent,
Unless some hasty means could give it vent;
For when love's heart is free from doubt and fear
It sayeth much that love would feign to hear.
Thus went the time until the glowing west
Was telling that the sun had gone to rest.

They reached the shore, though he was soaking
wet,

Before they left, the wedding day was set.

Three weeks passed on, the blessed eve drew near,
The wedding bells were chiming loud and clear.
That night they vowed to love and serve through
life;

There never lived a happier man and wife.

In Mistle still to-day there can be seen

A thatch-roofed house, twined round with ivy
green;

Upon the lawn a boy and girl at play—

This is the home where Ed and Alice stay.

A BALM FOR WEARY MINDS.

What a balm for the mind is the joyous spring,

What fragrant nectar its breezes bring;

How the babbling brook and the birds we hear,

Lull the heart from worry, the soul from fear;

What magnet power its measures hold

To keep the soul from growing old!

What joy upon the turf to lie

And watch the fleeting butterfly,

To hear the bee as it buzzes by;

The humming bees as they go and come,

Sipping honey from the bloom.

Wake, fainting heart, around thee look,

Stroll through the woods, sit by the brook,
And hear it clatter, laugh and sing,
A flood of hope to you 'twill bring.
Look, see the orchard a mass of snow,
Sending sweet fragrance by winds that blow;
Drink deep of its joys, on its fragrance fill,
That thy soul may stand cold winter's chill.
Look at the daisies, see them bend,
Giving their fragrance to each wind;
The lilies in their lovely array
Think of the words the sowers say:
Toil not, spin not, yet how they grow,
So fragrant and spotless and whiter than snow.
List to the thrush up in the trees,
The song of the cuckoo, the hum of the bees;
The tame and wild flowers, drink deep their
sweet scent,
Surely thy sad heart will then be content.
On springtime's fair bosom rest thy aching head,
Who cannot feel springtime surely is dead.

TELL ME, DEEP OCEAN.

Tell me, deep ocean, why not be still,
Why not this surging cease,
Why shouldst thou sing this mournful sound,
Oh, why not hold thy peace?

Is it a tale of love you sing,
Tell me, oh mighty deep;
What some poor sailor bade thee bring,
Just as he sank to sleep?

If so, I yearn to know thy song,
Pray, make it known, oh wave;
I had a lover, brave and strong,
Who met a sailor's grave.

I yearn to know his parting words,
Were they not told to thee?
If so, I pray thee make them known,
Pray tell, were they of me?

SHOULD I SPY LOVE.

If I should chance to spy love far at sea,
With outstretched arm beckoning unto me;
Though I bereft complete of spar and sail,
'Twould not prevail.

IF LOVE COULD SEE.

If love could see each other's heart,
And read the truth which they impart;
Much doubt and fears it would relieve,
No love would e'er have aught to grieve.

TEMPTATION.

Since I got 'ligion
Tryin' to do what's right
Devil, jus' to temp' me,
Keeps ol' sin in sight.

Farmers plant th'ir melons
Jam up 'gin the fence;
Leave the hen-coops open
Like they got no sense.

Man who own the orch'rd
Done mov' off to town;
Peaches an' the apples
Rot'nin' on the groun'.

In a trap th's mornin'
By the 'simmon tree,
Saw a grea' big 'possum,
Fat as he cou'd be.

Wou'd 've got th't 'possum
Eph—he'd never kno',
Th't his trap done co't him,
Got a 'ligion tho'.

People got no bizness
Fo' to temp' a man;
'Fusin' water-melons
More th'n I can stan'.

If they's out th're waitin'
T'night whin I com' 'long,
They shan't teach no oth'r
Christ'an to go wrong.

Sally, bake a hoe cake;
Get the kittle hot,
Goin' bring back a chicken
If I don't git shot.

SOME ONE SOME WHERE.

Some one! Some one! And yet, I do not know
In what fair spot, or who this one may be.
Somewhere! Somewhere! I know on land or
sea,
There is a soul that's all the world to me.

Two eyes! Two eyes! The hue I cannot tell,
A glance from them, my soul doth ever pine.
The joy! The joy! The heavens will come to
earth,
The moment I behold them fixed in mine.

For you! For you! For your sweet sake alone,
I live! I toil! And oh, with blistered feet,
I rove! I rove! I seek thee in the dark.
I pray that God may grant us some day soon to
meet.

WHEN THE LEAVES BEGIN TO FALL.

Wh'n the flo'ers droop an' wither,
An' the woods 'mence turnin' brown,
An' the leaves all dried and curled up,
Comes er droppin' to the groun',
Seems er kin'er saddenin' feelin'
Comes a stealin' over all,
Wh'n the air begins a bitin',
An' the leaves begin to fall.

There's no use o' th's here sadness,
Crops been good, can't wish fo' mo',
Smoke hous' will be full o' bacon,
Barn an' crib fill'd to de do',
Yet, a kin'er saddenin' feelin',
Comes er stealin' over all,
Wh'n the air begins a bitin',
An' the leaves begin to fall.

Maybe th's saddenin' feelin',
The good Lord sen's on to say
That we mortals best get ready,
For the grea' big Harvest Day.
Seems er kin'er saddenin' feelin',
Comes er stealin' over all,
Wh'n the air begins a bitin',
An' the leaves begin to fall.

KEEP ER INCHIN'.

Dere's no use er rippin', honey,
An' er tearin' like a dunce
O'er de hills an' up de mountains,
Try'n to reach de top at once!
'Member yo' was made fo' walkin',
Fo' yo' got no wings to fly;
Keep er inchin' an' er inchin',
Yo'll git dere by an 'by.

Co'se de top looks purty, yondah,
Furdemo', confess I mus'
Dat it's all up dere er waitin'
Fo' de one dat gits dere fus,
But es sho's yo' starts a dashin'
Yo' will fall, an' fall to lie!
Keep er inchin' an' er inchin',
Yo'll git dere by an' by.

Dis big worl'—de good Lord made it,
Tuk His own time an' His way;
An' de Good Book I read tells me
He di'nt make it in er day.
Yo' cain't nevah beat de Mastah,
An' it ain't wo'th while to try;
Keep er inchin' an' er inchin',
Yo'll git dere by an' by.

DEEP IN LOVE.

Lips jus' like a rose bud,
Teeth that fairly shine,
Eyes ez black an' glossy
Ez er muscadine.

Jus' a little angel,
Right down from above;
I'm mos' ravin' crazy,
Gone so deep in love.

Since the night I met you,
Jus' ain't had no res',
Heart it goes er jumpin',
All day, gin my breast.

Honey, won't you be mine?
Lis'en, child, yo' mus'!
Jus' ez sho's you 'fuse me,
M' heart will swell an' bus'.

A MAGIC CHANGE.

When I was young I had a mind to rise,
To know the earth and seek the vaulted skies;
And with a gnawing thirst to slake I sought
To master well what brush and pen had wrought.

But to my home there came a mound of clay;
'Twas fashioned well by Nature's cunning art;
Though it was small, at once it gained the sway,
Became the one great treasure of my heart.

A magic change came o'er me at the birth
Of that sweet gift which Nature to me brought.
Content I felt to dwell in peace on earth,
To see it rise, I had no other thought.

I yearn to see it as a beacon light,
That blinded men might see and know the good;
I yearn to see it in its wisdom's flight
Surpass the realms where that great Plato stood.

LOOKIN' ON.

It's easy 'nough to set er gazin'
At me out heah in the fight,
Sayin' "jus' do this or t'other,
Ev'rything will com' out right."

But yo' com' get in the battl',
Other words,—jus' tak' my place,
Let the shot an' shell com' whizzin'
By, so close, they'll scorch your face.
Th'n you'll fin' er great big diff'nce,
'Tween the facin' o' er gun,
An' er settin' off er lookin'
An' er sayin', what you'd done.

KINDRED VOICES.

O Wind! thou hast a human voice,
And so hast thou, O Sea!
O Rock! O Tree! O Shrub! O Flower!
I'm one in heart with thee.

Sometime, I feel thou art my kin,
Thy blood within me flows,
I hear thy call in every sigh,—
In every wind that blows.

Deep in the woods, I often sit,
'Way from the mighty throng,
My heart o'erflows with ecstasy,
So wondrous is thy song.

What art thou like, thou windy form,
That breathes upon my cheek?
O Rock! O Tree! O Shrub! O Flower!
Teach me thy lore to speak.

DESERTED.

Sittin' here er hummin', tryin' not to care,
As tho' it mak's no dif'rence, Sally isn't here.

She done gone an' lef' me an' took little Moses too.
Lord, have mercy on me! What am I to do?

Said she couldn't stan' me; thought I couldn't her.
'Lowed she's goin' to leave me; said I didn't car'.

Th' night do seem so lonely; home don't 'pear th'
same.

Th' more I think erbout it, see I was t' blame.

If she'd jus' com' back to me, she could have her
way.

Maybe the Lord would fetch her if I would kneel
an' pray.

Who's that there snec'rin' underneath the bed?
Com' from there, little Moses, boy; bob your
woolly head.

Say, chil,' wher's your mother? She's in th'
closet, dad.

Sal, com' fix my supper 'fore yo' make me mad.

LITTLE BABY SUGAR SWEET.

Written on and dedicated to George Wyatt, Jr., son of Dr.
G. W. Wyatt, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Com' here, baby, sugar sweet, befo' th' bees get
yo' to eat.

My, your head is full o' san.' Yo's so heavy,
papa's man.

Wife, I's tol' you till I'm tired, to keep this baby
out th' yeard.

Th' bees 'll tak' him to their gum an' mak' him up
in honeycom.'

Er laughin'? Ah, yo' jus' too smart. Com' an'
hug up to my heart.

They say that babes as wise as yo' can only liv' a
year or two.

Well, I'll be happy while yo's here; to him an age
is but er year.

Seems I hear er buzzin' soun.' My, th' bees are all
er roun.'

Liza, com' an' close the doo.' Ain't they seen
nothin' sweet befo'?

They try to br'ak right throu' th' screen; never
saw th' bees so mean.

Oh, go 'way, bee; I hear yo' hum. Yo' can't take
baby to your gum.

Go 'way from here. Hear what I said? Bless
if I don't kill yo' dead.

APPRECIATIONS

I find in Mr. McGirt's verses a meaning and accent which belong only to the true poet.

(Mrs.) REBECCA HARDING DAVIS.

Mr. McGirt's poetry is spontaneous, natural and true.

(Mrs.) MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

My dear Mr. McGirt: Your verses indicate talent. I see no reason why you should not have a great deal of success.

(Mrs.) ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

Mr. James E. McGirt:

Dear Sir:—You show in these verses a talent for putting thoughts into literary form very rare. I have found the sentiment of the poems always pure and orthodox—often sweet and touching; there is a simplicity about them which wins the reader's attention

I remain sincerely yours,

JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

You show a great deal of talent in your poems.
I find them very interesting and sweet.

THOMAS NELSON PAGE.

Mr. James E. McGirt, Philadelphia.

My dear Sir:—I have given some spare hours to the reading of your poems, which you were kind enough to furnish me in volume and manuscript. It is always gratifying to me to find one of your race aim to advance or excel in literary efforts. I was specially pleased with the merits of your poems, which should certainly command a large circle of readers, not only among your own people, but among all lovers of genuine poetic effort.

Yours truly,
(Col.) A. K. McCLURE.

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, ALABAMA.

Mr. James E. McGirt.

My dear Sir: I cannot pretend to be a literary critic, but I did like your verses. I liked, particularly, the verses entitled "When the Sun Shines Hot."

I wish your volume success.

Very truly yours,

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON,
Principal.

Mr. J. E. McGirt, Philadelphia, Pa.

My dear Sir:—Your verses have the true poetic ring, while the tender and noble sentiments they voice and the note of inspiration which pervades them will have a strong appeal not only to the youth of your own race but for the youth of all races.

Sincerely yours,

O. S. MARDEN,

Editor Success Magazine.

Dear Mr. McGirt:—I am reading the poems with pleasure and profit, and they surely show an insight into the heart of things that is very excellent. So here is a hand-grasp over the miles, and I am ever your sincere

ELBERT HUBBARD.

A NEW NEGRO POET

Volume of Melodious Verse from a Young Philadelphia
Magazine Editor and Writer

There is issued to-day from the press of The John C. Winston Company a volume of verse which will make a double appeal, one for the merit of the poems themselves and one because of their origin and authorship. "For Your Sweet Sake" and the other verses which make up the volume are the work of James Ephraim McGirt, a young Negro of this city, whose work justifies the high estimate placed upon it by many of those who have read it. It is perhaps not too much to say that no verse of equal quality has been written by any member of the race since Paul Laurence Dunbar attracted the attention of the literary world. Mr. McGirt writes both in English and in dialect, and while he is good in both, there is a simplicity and tenderness in the latter form that is peculiarly charming. "When the Sun Shines Hot" is characteristic of his style and sentiment:

No, dere ain't no use er workin' in de blazin'
summertime,
Whin de fruit hab filled de orchard an' de burries
bend de vine;
Dere's enuf ter keep us libin' in de little gyarden
spot,
An' der ain't no use'n workin' w'en de sun shines
hot.

Fur I'ze read it in de Bible 'bout de lilies how
dey grow;
It was put in der er purpus dat de workin' men
mout know
Dat dis diggin' an' er grabben wusn't me'nt in our
lot,
An' der ain't no use'n workin' w'en de sun shines
hot.

Does yer heer de stream er callin' az it cralls
erlong de rill?
Does yer se de vines er wavin', biddin' me ter
kum an' fill?
Whar's m' hook and line—say, Hannah, give
me all de bait yer got,
Fur der ain't no use'n workin' w'en de sun shines
hot.

Jus' 'bout dark I com' hom' strolin' with a bunch
o' lov'ly trout
Hannah she c'mmence er grinnin', little Rastus
'gin to shout;
Soon de hoecake is er bakin', fish er fryin', table
sot.
No, der ain't no use'n workin' w'en de sun shines
hot.

A different note, and one that voices the pathos and tragedy of the Negro problem, is struck in these lines to which Mr. McGirt has given the title "Experience":

They told me that the path I took was hard,
That many a time my weary feet would bleed;
They said at last I'd find my way was barred;
I would not heed.

They bade me stop and go the other way;
This path, they said, Fate thorns and thistles
strew;
But I was young, Ambition led the way;
I thought I knew.

But when my bleeding feet came to the end,
And I was bound and scourged by cruel Fate;
Alas, I cried, pray let me start again;
It was too late.

Still another aspect of the work, that which has to do with the sentimental element in the Negro nature, is represented in these lines, called "Mystery":

I do not know the ocean's song,
Or what the brooklets say.
At eve I sit and listen long,
I cannot learn their lay,
But as I linger by the sea,
And that sweet song comes unto me,
It seems, my love, it sings of thee.

I do not know why poppies grow
Amid the wheat and rye;
The lilies bloom as white as snow,
I cannot tell you why.
But all the flowers of the spring,
The bees that hum, the birds that sing,
A thought of you they seem to bring.

I cannot tell why silvery Mars
Moves through the heav'ns at night;
I cannot tell you why the stars
Adorn the vault with light.
But what sublimity I see
Upon the mount, the hill, the lea,
It brings, my love, a thought of thee.

I do not know what in your eyes
That caused my heart to glow,
And why my spirit longs and cries,
I vow I do not know.
But when you first came in my sight
My slumbering soul awoke in light,
And since the day I've known no night.

Such work as this naturally inspires a wish to know something of the personality of the author. Young McGirt, for he is but twenty-nine years old, comes from North Carolina, and he takes his name from the family to whom his parents belonged in slavery days. While he was still a boy his father and mother removed from Robinson county to Greensboro, and there they remained, the lad attending Bennett College. After graduating he taught school in Greensboro

for a year, and six years ago came to Philadelphia, where he has since been engaged in lecturing occasionally to churches and lyceums and in editing McGirt's Magazine, a periodical which has a large circulation among members of the Negro race here and throughout the country.

McGirt says modestly that he has been writing verse, of one sort or another, ever since he was twelve years old. The faculty was inherited from his parents, who in their slave days were fond of inventing doggerel and messages in verse to one another, messages which were written out for them by masters and mistresses. When James Ephraim tried his hand at the same amusement he was encouraged in it by father and mother, and he has perserved until he is in a fair way to obtain the recognition which he really deserves.—*Philadelphia Ledger*.

“For Your Sweet Sake,” the verses never fail in melody which is a characteristic of the race. Some of it is in dialect, but sometimes it becomes true poetry.—*N. Y. Sun*.

Jas. E. McGirt, a young Negro of Philadelphia—he is only 29—promises to fill the niche left vacant by the recent death of Paul Laurence Dunbar. Like Dunbar, young McGirt attempts many forms and many meters, but is at his best in Negro dialect.—*N. Y. Herald*.

“For Your Sweet Sake”—they have music and humor in them.—*Evening Mail*, N. Y. City.

“For Your Sweet Sake,” by Jas. E. McGirt, verses in celebration of the Negro daily life, and a few poems not in dialect in praise of various aspects of Nature.—*Boston Transcript*.

“For Your Sweet Sake” is a volume of poems by James E. McGirt, a young Africo-American singer of prominence. In these latter verses the poet has compressed much of the quaint philosophy and expression of the life of the colored people in the South.—*Boston Globe*, Boston, Mass.

In James E. McGirt Philadelphia has a Negro poet. He represents a distinct and laudable tendency.—*Philadelphia Telegraph*.

A NEGRO POET WHO ARRIVES.

James E. McGirt, who publishes a magazine in this city and who stands high in the intellectual circles of the colored race, has just published, through The John C. Winston Company, a handsome little book of verse entitled “For Your Sweet Sake.” Mr. McGirt is a young man of liberal education and poetic conception who has

labored long in many fields of literature, but who finds his best metier in an outburst of song. We do not hesitate to say that he is the legitimate successor of Paul Laurence Dunbar. His poetry depends on no racial condition, but it is evident that he has a poetic sentiment which is partially temperamental and inherited, while his literary comprehension is unbounded by any such consideration. This is an unusually well digested book of poetry and is full of that uplift which only the true poet has.—*Philadelphia Inquirer*.

A young Philadelphia colored man writes exquisite verse. "For Your Sweet Sake," by James E. McGirt. Pathos, humor and affecting sentiment will be found in these poems. These poems, forty-five in number, cover a wide variety of topics—and many are couched in the dialect of the Negro—showing the quaint moods of thought and unique methods of expression of that race. Some of the poems speak glowingly of the forest as in "The Spirit of the Oak," while others tell of love in serious mood and of courtship in lighter vein, of which "If Loving Were Wooing," and "Anna, Won't You Marry Me?" are fine examples. There are inspiring songs of patriotic trend also, as in "The Siege of Manila" and "God Bless Our Country." These poems contain much of a meritorious character in point

of rhythm and motive, and give promise of much greater achievements in the realm of poesy by the author.—*Philadelphia Record*.

“For Your Sweet Sake,” James E. McGirt:

In this slim volume of poems we find some beautiful thoughts and a keen appreciation of all the varied phases of nature. James McGirt has the true verse-making faculty, adding a nice choice of words to a keen sense of rhythm.—*Item*, Philadelphia, Pa.

Native talent shown in the verses of James E. McGirt.

This new aspirant for poetic laurels is one of the best examples of the truth that “poets are born, not made.” He possesses true poetic insight and a rugged grasp on the beauties of nature. His poems are not all in dialect, but all carry with them that deep intuition which bespeaks the born singer.—*Washington Post*, Washington, D. C.



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